

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAN SA 00808 182039Z  
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /050 W  
-----190618 100274 /22

R 182000Z FEB 77  
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3428  
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA  
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA  
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE  
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA  
USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 0808

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, ES  
SUBJECT: LAST MINUTE ELECTIONEERING

REFS: (A) SAN SALVADOR 0499, (B) SAN SALVADOR 0013, (C) SAN SALVADOR  
0745

1. FOUR DAYS BEFORE THE 2/20 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND ON THE LAST  
DAY OF LEGAL CAMPAIGNING, PCN AND UNO BACKERS INVESTED HEAVILY  
IN NEWSPAPER ADS DENOUNCING EACH OTHER AND PROMISING A NEW  
WORLD FOR SALVADORANS IF THEY ARE SELECTED OVER THE OTHER PARTY.  
THE UNO COALITION HAS SUFFERED THROUGHOUT THE CAMPAIGN  
FROM LACK OF EXPOSURE (LARGELY DUE TO LACK OF FUNDS) AND A  
NON-CHARISMATIC, EMPHYSEMIC LEADER. BELOW-THE-BELT MUD  
SLINGING HAS NOT MADE MUCH OF AN APPEARANCE IN THE DAMPAIGN,  
PROBABLY BECAUSE EACH CANDIDATE IS AWARE OF AND FEARS EXPOSURE  
OF THE OTHER'S HOLD CARD.

2. A LARGE (50,000 BY GOES ESTIMATES, 20,000 BY OUR) CROWD  
PARTICIPATED IN A FINAL PCN RALLY ON THE EVENING OF 2/16,  
WHEREIN PARTY LEADERS MADE SPEECHES  
PUNCTUATED BY THE PRO FORMA CHEERS OF THE CROWD. THE PRESIDENT  
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PAGE 02 SAN SA 00808 182039Z

OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ATTACKED EXILED UNO LEADER  
NAPOLEON DUARTE AS A "TRAITOR", ACCUSING HIM OF ATTEMPTING  
TO WIN THE ELECTION BY GETTING THE BACKING OF THE US  
CONGRESS. AFTER THE RALLY PRESIDENT MOLINA ADDRESSED  
THE NATION VIA TV AND RADION, (THE GOVT PARTY TIED UP THE COUNTRY'S  
MASS MEDIA FOR VIRTUALLY ENTIRE EVENING) WITH THE ONLY SURPRISE  
IN HIS TALK BEING A GENERAL INVITATION TO INTERAMERICAN

PRESS ASSOCIATION MEMBERS AND FREE WORLD PRESS TO VISIT EL SALVADOR ON ELECTION DAY AND "SEE FOR THEMSELVES THE DEMOCRATIC ELECTORAL PROCESS." HE SAID THE INVITATION DID NOT EXTEND TO FOREIGN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OR REPRESENTATIVES OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANS,ZRPE "SALVADORANS ARE JEALOUS OF THEIR SOVEREIGNTY." HE SPOKE OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION ACCUSATIONS AGAINST HIS GOVERNMENT AND NOTED THAT HIS ACCUSERS HAVE NEVER SPOKEN OUT AGAINST THE "INTERNATIONAL SUBVERSION THAT HAS TAKEN PLACE IN EL SALVADOR FOR THE LAST 6 YEARS."

3. NEWSPAPER ADS FOR THE PCN HAVE FOCUSED ON CLARAMOUNT'S ALLEGED COMPLICITY WITH "INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM" AND TERRORIST ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE COUNTRY. PRO-UNO ADS HAVE GIVEN WIDE COVERAGE TO NAPOLEON DUARTE'S WASHINGTON VISIT WHEREIN HE MET WITH VICE-PRESIDENT MONDALE, SENATOR KENNEDY AND OTHERS TO PREDICT CONTINUED GOVERNMENT FRAUD IN SUNDAY'S VOTING. A GOVERNMENT-IMPOSED NEWS BLACKOUT ON REPORTS OF DUARTE'S VISIT GAVE THE UNO ADS GREATER IMPACT, AND ILLUSTRATED THE WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY OF THE CURRENT REGIME TO WITHHOLD INTERNATIONAL NEWS FROM SALVADORANS. ONE OF THE MORE INTERESTING PERSONAL ATTACKS WAS AN OPEN LETTER PAID FOR BY A SELF-PROCLAIMED REPRESENTATIVE OF SALVADORAN WOMANHOOD WHO ACCUSED UNO VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE MORALES EHRlich OF PAVING THE WAY FOR THE ENTRANCE OF PLAYBOY ENTERPRISES, INC. ON THE SALVADORAN MORAL SCENE BY CONTRACTING TO BE THEIR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE HERE.

4. A HEIGHTENING OF PUBLIC CONCERN AND A DEGREE OF IMPATIENCE TO GET THE ELECTION BEHIND THEM IS EVIDENT IN THESE HOURS BEFORE SUNDAY. POST-ELECTION (AND PRE JULY 1ST)  
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PAGE 03 SAN SA 00808 182039Z

PROBLEMS, HOWEVER, MAY TURN OUT TO BE THE REAL THREAT. CERTAINLY THAT WAS THE CASE 5 YEARS AGO WHEN PRESIDENT-ELECT MOLINA ABORTED AN OVERSEAS TRIP TO RUSH BACK TO EL SALVADOR AFTER HE LEARNED OF A COUP ATTEMPT BY DISSIDENT MILITARY OFFICERS AGAINST PRESIDENT FIDEL SANCHEZ HERNANDEZ. ALTHOUGH THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION FORCES, CLAIMING HE HAD REALLY WON THE 1972 ELECTION, THREW HIS SUPPORT TO THE DISSIDENT OFFICERS, POOR ORGANIZATION AND RAPID GOVERNMENT AND LOYAL OFFICER REACTION DOOMED THE COUP. IF, ONCE AGAIN, THE OPPOSITION FORCES FEEL CHEATED, THE EMBASSY BELIEVES IT UNLIKELY THEY WILL TAKE TO THE STREETS WITH COL CLARAMOUNT AT THEIR HEAD, AS HE HAS PREDICTED (REFTEL C).  
LOZANO

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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